



## COVID-19 VACCINE TASK FORCE

### COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force Meeting #7

March 10, 2021

10:30AM – 12:00PM

Meeting Minutes

---

### Task Force Committee Members Attendees

#### **Emergency Services**

Vince Pierucci, EMS -

Chief Jonathan Stornetta, Fire

Sheriff Ian Parkinson – Law Enforcement

#### **Bioethicist**

[Luis Ochoa, MD - Absent](#)

#### **Community Health Centers**

Stephen Clarke, MD

#### **Pharmacies**

Maronee Hollister, PharmD

#### **Long Term Care**

Karen Jones, Ombudsman, SLO County

#### **Business Community**

Kristen Yetter, Promega Biosciences

#### **Occupational Health**

Brian Roberts, MD, MedStop

#### **Hospitals**

[Mark Lisa, Tenet - Absent](#)

#### **Health Insurers**

[Paul Jaconette, CenCal - Absent](#)

#### **Education**

Dr. James Brescia, County Office of Education

Courtney Kienow, Cal Poly-Higher Education

#### **Child Care**

Raechelle Bowlay, CCRC

#### **Corrections**

Christy Mulkerin, MD, Jail CMO

#### **Religious Leaders**

Pastor Tim Thuele

Rabbi Janice Mehring

[Monsignor Ed Callahan - Absent](#)

#### **Organizations serving racial and ethnic groups**

Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia, Latinx

Veronica Avery, NAACP

#### **Organizations serving people with disabilities**

Diva Johnson, Tri-Counties Regional Center

## Organizations serving people with limited English proficiency

Irebid Gilbert, Herencia Indigena

## Community Representatives

Mary Jean Sage, Health Commission

Betsy Whitaker, Med Anthropologist

## Hospice

Kim Chartrand, ASPC

## Homeless Serving Organizations

Janna Nichols

## Voluntary Organizations

[Rick London, United Way - Absent](#)

## Behavioral Health

[Jill Bolster-White, Transitions Mental Health Association- Absent](#)

## Utilities

Samantha Caldwell, PG&E Diablo Canyon, Energy

Bill Robeson, City of Arroyo Grande Water/Wastewater/Trash

## Agriculture

Brent Burchett, Farm Bureau

## Transportation

Geoff Straw, SLORTA

(Tania Arnold, SLORTA)

## Welcome and Public Comment Review

Jen Miller welcomed task force members, expressed appreciation to the members for their advocacy on behalf of the organizations and communities they serve and represent. She reviewed the public comments submitted through the "Share your Input" button at the [recoverslo.org website](https://recoverslo.org). The County is shifting away from the use of the term "lottery" for the registration process and instead is using the term "registry."

# Vaccine Advocacy

Public Comment summary 2.23.21 – 3.8.21

## Total Unique Comments

| Quantity | Comment Type |
|----------|--------------|
| 164      | All          |

## Vaccine Registration & Logistics (46%)

| Quantity | Comment Type  |
|----------|---|
| 40       | Comments on messaging or general vaccination logistics ( <i>recommendations for vax logistics, criticizing supply, confusion about lottery</i> )        |
| 18       | Comments or questions about vaccine registration process and website ( <i>many struggling with telephone line, how to confirm/cancel appointments</i> ) |
| 8        | Comments or questions about 2nd dose appointments   |
| 4        | Feedback on how the vaccine clinics are run.  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 3 | Advocating for family members to be vaccinated at the same time.                        |
| 1 | Comments or questions regarding documents and identification needed for appointment.    |
| 1 | Comments or questions for or about the task force and/or meeting minutes.               |
| 1 | Comments or questions about the Johnson & Johnson vaccine ( <i>local availability</i> ) |

### Occupation-Related Prioritization (36%)

| Quantity | Comment Type   |
|----------|--|
| 29       | Advocating to prioritize teachers and school personnel, particularly those working in-person.  |
| 26       | Advocating to prioritize other job categories ( <i>grocery store employees, agriculture employees, massage therapists, food service workers, informal caregivers, youth sport coaches, higher education teachers, personal care, local sign language instructors, airline pilots, IT serving critical infrastructure, pharmaceutical employees, MRC volunteers</i> ) |
| 4        | Organizations advocating to prioritize their staff or volunteers ( <i>Pacific Wildlife Care, Cal Trans, UPS</i> )  |

### Age & Underlying Conditions (11%)

| Quantity | Comment Type   |
|----------|--|
| 9        | Advocating to prioritize the immunocompromised, all ages.                            |
| 6        | Advocating for allocation by age only.   |
| 2        | Advocating to prioritize people with disabilities ( <i>schizophrenia</i> )           |
| 1        | Explaining personal situation and questioning when they will be eligible for vaccine |

### Other Comments (7%)

| Quantity | Comment Type   |
|----------|--|
| 7        | Praise and thanks.   |
| 3        | Advocating for allocation to those who work/shop/see doctors in SLO county, and face difficulties securing appointments in their county ( <i>Santa Barbara, Monterey</i> ) |
| 2        | Offering to help provide vaccine or offering locations to administer vaccines.   |

#### **Vaccine Task Force Communications Update - Tara Kennon, Public Information Officer**

Tara expressed appreciation to Task Force members for their continued messaging to their networks. She provided an update on where the County is focusing its efforts, with the next hurdle being vaccine hesitancy. More information and talking points will be forthcoming.

#### **COVID-19 Status in SLO County as of 3/9 - Dr. Borenstein**

The number of active infections and positivity rate continues to decrease. SLO County is in the Red Tier, but the test positivity rate metric is in the yellow tier. The County is also in good standing with the health equity metric.

### **Vaccine Allocation and Distribution**

To date, more than 81,000 doses have been administered in SLO County. Approximately 75% of those have been administered by the County and the remaining doses have been administered by hospitals, pharmacies and the federal pharmacy partnership for long term care facilities. Over 20,000 SLO County residents have received both doses through County Clinics, and an additional 36,000+ people have received their first dose in a County Clinic. Although SLO County's allocation has increased over the last couple of weeks, there may be a decrease ahead due to the State's plan to allocate 40% of doses to counties that contain the lowest Healthy Places Index (HPI) zip codes. SLO County does not have any lowest quartile HPI zip codes and therefore will not receive the extra allocation.

Dr. Borenstein reviewed the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine ("Janssen") now available for use. It can be stored at regular refrigerator temperatures which makes it easier to transport and distribute to rural areas. It does not contain live virus that causes COVID-19 and it is proven to be highly effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

Dr. Borenstein reviewed the various distribution channels for vaccines in SLO County. In recent weeks, the County's mass vaccination clinics administer between 10,000 and 12,000 doses weekly and have the capacity to administer 15,000 weekly. CHC has come on as a new partner receiving federal allocation intended to reach vulnerable communities and they plan to distribute between 1,200 and 1,600 doses per week, with the aim to scale up to 2,500 doses weekly. More pharmacies receiving doses from a federal allocation have expanded local offerings (Rite Aid, CVS, Walgreens, Vons) totaling 14 pharmacies in the federal program in SLO County to date. Additionally, there are local pharmacies and employers that receive doses through the Public Health Department's allocation (Costco, Ralph's Cayucos Pharmacy, Morro Bay Drug and Gift, PG&E, Elite Clinic and more). Several hospitals are also offering vaccine. In total, upwards of 13,500 vaccines are being administered in SLO County this week.

Dr Stephen Clarke, CHC, reported on plans and activities of CHC. Both the Arroyo Grande and Paso Robles CHC clinics will be providing vaccines 4 days/week. Mobile and pop-up clinics are being planned to reach specific groups. Dr. Clarke indicated that CHC is experiencing some vaccine resistance with the 65+ age group. They will be using both J&J and Moderna vaccines and are taking the vaccines to the targeted populations. Of note were two pop up clinics in Cambria over the past 2 weeks and a pop up clinic at 40 Prado planned for Sunday 3/14.

In the continued effort to reduce barriers to the vaccine for vulnerable populations, the Public Health Department's Health Equity Coordinator outlined strategies the department and partners are working on to make sure vaccine is available for all SLO County residents.

### **Local Considerations**

Dr. Borenstein acknowledged that demand for vaccine among the 65+ age group seems to have tapered and it is time to open up vaccines to additional occupational sectors included in Phase 1B as outlined by the State. She proposed that the following groups be considered as eligible for vaccine now:

- **Education workers** - including child care, K-12, and higher education in any role with risk of exposure at work. The County has already begun vaccinating this group, but the intent would be to open it up broadly.

- **Food and agriculture workers** – The County has been planning farmworker vaccine events (Farm Worker Fridays), but proposed opening to all food and agriculture now.
- **Emergency services workers** - The County has already begun vaccinating sworn law enforcement officers, but intends to open this sector more broadly today.

In addition to the occupational sectors in Phase 1b, the Task Force was requested to consider moving forward now in vaccinating the State recommended medically-vulnerable groups as follows:

- **Individuals age 16 and older with certain high-risk medical conditions and disabilities;** with self-attestation (these include persons significantly impacted with cancer, chronic kidney disease, and chronic pulmonary disease, down syndrome, pregnancy, sickle cell disease, specific heart conditions, severe obesity and uncontrolled Type 2 diabetes). [See the full list of qualifying conditions.](#) List is subject to change.

Dr. Borenstein requested the task force consider all of the above listed groups as eligible, effective immediately with validation from the occupational sectors as requirement for proof of employment and self-attestation as the requirement for proof of medical condition or disability for circumstances where documentation is not easily obtained.

The County anticipates new guidance from the State soon that will provide clarity on inclusion of the following categories in Phase 1B:

- Additions to Emergency Services Sector: utility workers, public transportation staff, including airport staff, custodial staff
- Additions to Education and Child Care Sector: family care and Foster Care homes, recreational and after school care
- People in congregate settings

Dr. Borenstein asked for the blessing of the task force to move forward with inclusion of these groups in Phase 1B, once the State provides direction.

## **Discussion**

Members discussed specific populations and groups. Dr. Borenstein presented members with considerations and took informal polls with regards to prioritizing sectors and subgroups. In general, the task force supported moving forward immediately with the three occupational sectors and those in the high-risk medical conditions and disabilities group outlined above, prioritizing age over all else.

Courtney Kienow, Cal Poly, representing higher education – asked the task force to consider prioritizing a portion of next week’s appointments for staff in institutions of higher education. The task force voted not to prioritize this group over others, and to instead have higher education staff enter the registry with the rest of people eligible in Phase 1B.

Diva Johnson, TCRC, representing people with disabilities – requested that individuals with letters affirming their eligibility by way of intellectual or developmental disability from Tri-Counties Regional Center be prioritized in the registry for appointments. The task force agreed to this request, given the higher risk of severe outcomes from contracting the disease among this group.

Sheriff Ian Parkinson, representing law enforcement – requested personnel in the Courts, District Attorney and Public Defenders offices that have direct contact with inmates (judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys) be included in the Emergency Services sector. Although the State has put out a

statement that these groups are not eligible in Emergency Services, the task force recommended the County diverge from State guidance and consider these staff eligible in Phase 1B. Sheriff Parkinson agreed to reach out to agencies, including Victim Witness, to identify eligible staff that have prolonged exposure with jail inmates. Sheriff Parkinson agreed to coordinate vaccinating this group of staff after law enforcement through a closed POD (County clinic) located near the jail.

Janna Nichols, 5 Cities Homeless Coalition, representing homeless serving organizations - identified several groups that should be considered: housekeeping, food pantry staff and volunteers serving high-risk populations, and City Managers. Housekeepers may be considered "custodial" staff which may fall into the Emergency Services sector. The County will await CDPH guidance on this group. Food pantry staff and volunteers will be considered in the Food and Agriculture sector. City Managers would be considered in the Emergency Services sector as Emergency Managers.

Christy Mulkerin, MD, Jail CMO, representing corrections – there are 400 inmates currently housed in the jail. Approximately 200 of them could qualify for vaccine based on the underlying medical conditions or disabilities category. The County awaits guidance that "will be released shortly" about how to vaccinate people living in congregate settings, such as jails and homeless shelters. The task force was asked to consider offering vaccine to all inmates, ahead of CDPH guidance about where congregate care fits into the vaccination schema. The task force agreed that this "full sweep" approach to vaccinating inmates is favorable, will encourage more vaccine uptake, and will be a good population for use of the J&J vaccine.

Maronee Hollister, PharmD representing pharmacies – requested that we align County eligibility with that of the federally-supplied pharmacies for consistent eligibility criteria across all points of vaccine distribution.

Kris Yetter, Promega Biosciences, representing the business community – asked that if the County decides to vaccinate the jail population, essential government workers should also be vaccinated (clerks, judges, city staff). Discussion followed about vaccine being available to government workers considered in the three eligible sectors, particularly emergency services. Many of the functions of government staff are similar to retail, finance, communications, etc. which are not currently eligible for vaccine.

Karen Jones, LTC Ombudsman Services, Janna Nichols, Christy Mulkerin and Kim Chartrand, Hospice, ASPC – all commented about reserving the J&J vaccine for special populations: persons with dementia or very frail medical conditions, homeless persons, farm workers, inmates. Getting two vaccines will be a barrier for these groups. General support was obtained from the task force.

Dr. Roberts, MedStop, representing occupational medicine – requested more detail and clarity on the definitions of the allowable medical conditions.

### **Closing and Upcoming Events**

Next meetings (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month):

- March 24, 2021 10:30AM – 12:00PM
- April 14, 2021 10:30AM – 12:00PM
- April 28, 2021 10:30AM – 12:00PM
- May 11, 2021 10:30AM – 12:00PM

Meeting notes, slides, and public comment form available at

<https://www.recoverslo.org/en/slo-county-vaccine-taskforce.aspx>

Adjourned at 12:10pm.